Rethinking Rural Out-Migration :

Japanese Experiences and Lessons for Vietnam's New Rural Policy

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〔Abstract〕

This paper describes the causes of rapid out-migration known as the "Kaso" problem and its impact on social structure and community development efforts after the oil crisis of 1973 that occurred during Japan's period of rapid economic growth and simultaneously resulted in hyper-growth in metropolitan areas known as "Kamitsu" problem. It examines the capacity of two communities (Haiya and Ashu villages) to successfully cope with the problems of depopulation and suggests policy recommendations for community development of depopulated areas elsewhere. The factors that induce movements away from remote mountain areas are divided into external factors (pull factors, particularly, the drastic change in the nationwide labour force structure) and internal factors (push factors such as economic, social, fiscal, psychological and demographic factors). The deterioration of the traditional social structure often caused disorganization in community decision-making abilities and reduced ability to institute new forms of community organization and decision-making. It is suggested that promoting substitute industry suited to the natural environmental setting of given area primarily involving community participation and establishing the principle of "cooperation and equality" under the leadership of those who have ability and respect from community members achieved successful recovery of the Kaso problem. Policy recommendations for community development of depopulated areas are : creation of new industries that make best use of the geographic setting of the region, development of human capital and community organizations through the participation and consensus of all community members and concerted efforts to improve the quality of life through development of local plans. Additional research will be required to identify depopulation problems left unresolved, to examine what kinds of community development efforts have succeeded in coping with the impacts of heavy out-migration and to study ways to establish and reform new community structures in mountain villages, especially decision-making structures. Rural problems are recognized as

unavoidable social phenomena in the process of modernization, urbanization and industrialization in both developed and developing countries. This may be crucial for rural development policy in Vietnam. Coping with rural problems in a globalizing world is an emerging agenda for rural policy in Vietnam as well as a global challenge for the world.

キーワード：Community based decision-making, Japan, Rural-urban migration, Rural development policy, Vietnam

Ⅰ. INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the causes of rapid out-migration in several Japanese mountain communities in Kyoto Prefecture and analyses the impacts of this process on social structure and community development efforts. By means of a comparative field study undertaken before and after the oil crisis of 1973 that occurred during Japan's period of rapid economic growth, the paper examines the capacity of these communities to cope with the problems of depopulation.

In the late 1950s, Japan went through a heating fuel revolution, a rapid conversion from the use of charcoal and firewood to the use of petrochemical fuels in everyday life. This changeover had a disastrous impact on many mountain villages that were dependent upon charcoal and firewood production for their basic economic livelihood.

Consequently, most of the mountain area communities have been drastically depopulated and disrupted due to the decline in this traditional form of employment. This demographic shift was associated with a worsening of the standard of living and the general welfare levels in these areas, a regional economic depression widely known as the "Kaso"[(1)] problem (the problem of rapid population loss and related social disruption in the hinterlands in Japan). This stands in marked contrast to the "Kamitsu"[(2)] problem (the urban problem caused by hyper-growth in metropolitan areas).

The Government of Japan identified the Kaso problem for the first time in 1966 and began to address this depopulation problem in earnest. In 1970, the Japanese Diet agreed to establish the Kaso Act for the development of areas suffering from rapid population loss. According to this Act, national, prefectural, and local government had to initiate comprehensive development plans to improve the industrial and social infrastructure within these regions (Japan, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1972).

In addition to these government efforts, there were many local community corrective efforts including attempts to develop new industries such as mushroom farming, mountain vegetable production and tourism. There was also a "renaissance movement" to protect traditional rural cultures and other programmes such as 4-H Youth Development Organization for the preservation of community identity and pride. These actions, along with the slowdown in the rate of nationwide economic growth that began in the late 1970s, have helped bring about a marked decrease in the rate of depopulation (Japan, National Land Agency, 1982).

Nevertheless, the following problems remain unsolved in the depopulated areas. First, the out-migration of young adults has caused an increase in the dependency ratio in the population, which is exacerbated by the rise in the percentage of elderly people living in these communities. This loss of young adults means that the remaining members of the labour force have more potential dependents to support in their communities. Second, the disappearance of traditional leaders and potential new leaders has destroyed the traditional hierarchical decision-making apparatus in many of these communities. So far, the remaining community members have not been able to institute a new form of community based decision-making apparatus to cope with change. Thirdly, services and infrastructures in these communities - public transportation, drinking water and sewage systems, hospitals, schools, community centres and industrial facilities - have deteriorated. These unsolved, disruptive problems have become serious obstacles not only to the improvement in the quality of life in such communities, but also to the overall economic development and environmental quality of these areas. The same problem appears to have existed in the Appalachian area of the southeastern United States in the 1950s (Price and Sikes, 1975).

Many previous studies dealing with this depopulation problem in Japan have focused primarily on the economic and demographic impacts in mountainous areas. However, there has been little research that scientifically analyses changes in the social structure of these communities, i. e. community leadership, community solidarity and autonomy, and the residents' values, expectations and lifestyles, since these sociological concepts are not easily measurable (Adachi, 1973). There have also been few studies aimed at alleviating the rural poverty of those who have been left behind in marginal areas while urbanites have benefited from Japan's rapid economic progress. More attention needs to be focused on the social consequences of heavy out-migration in mountain areas in order to encourage community development efforts aimed at helping these communities maintain local control of community issues and their sense of community cohesion and identity (Mitsuda, 1978, 1979a, 1979b).

The primary focus of this paper is on Japanese community experience in coping with the

impacts of rapid depopulation in mountain areas. Using a comparative study of community reorganization movement before and after the oil crises of 1973 and 1979, the author analysed the change in community structure, values, attitudes, and the expectations of community members as well as their vitality and their ability to adjust to important changes in their economic environment.

This analysis is based on an intensive field study undertaken in two charcoal producing villages, Haiya and Ashu, located in the Hokuso forest area of Northern Kyoto Prefecture. Detailed survey data collected by the author in four different periods (1972, 1978, 1981 and 1983) were presented as a basis for analysis and policy recommendations. These villages were selected for the following reasons : First, they had characteristic common and marked features often found in depopulated and depressed areas, to name a few : a) large number of farm forestry households in the villages, b) deteriorated economic condition of forestry and agriculture, c) isolation and remoteness from urban areas and d) self-contained socioeconomic life. Second, these communities had a different type of community power structure, which changed during the process of depopulation.

Field interviews were carried out with the head of all households in these villages as well as with all informants in the surveyed areas. Answers to questionnaires from all community members over twenty years old, including temporary forest workers, were used to investigate : the inducements that led the residents to migrate from these areas ; the change in the community power structure due to the process of depopulation ; the change in the community leadership structures that affect and determine the methods of adjustment in rural development efforts evolving in these new communities ; the change in community values, attitudes and expectations that have taken place as a result of the social structural changes of the communities ; and the capacity of the community to cope with the problems presented by the process of heavy out-migration.

Ⅱ. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE : DEPOPULATON AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN JAPAN

This section describes the historical process of depopulation and its relationship to the cycle of rapid economic growth from 1956 to 1972 and the economic slowdown after the oil crisis of 1973.

Heavy Out-Migration during Rapid Economic Growth

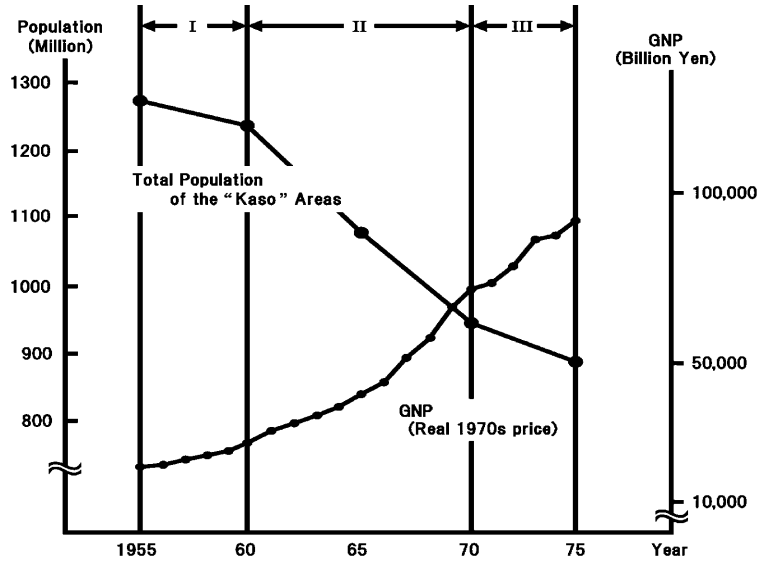
From 1960 to 1973, the average growth rate of the gross national product (GNP) was more than 10 percent per annum. Non-agricultural sectors rapidly changed the labour force structure. As the labour force shifted from the primary (extractive) sector to the secondary (industrial) and tertiary (service) sectors, rural people, especially the youngsters who had just graduated from high school, in large numbers, left the countryside for urban areas in search of better job opportunities and higher standards of living.

As a result, the percentage of all municipalities in which the decrease in population reached more than 10 percent increased from 6.5 percent (227 out of 3,280) in the period of 1955-1960 to 26.6 percent (897 out of 3,376) in the period of 1960-1965 and then to 28.8 percent (938 out of 3,330) between 1965 and 1970. These areas constituted 44 percent of national land area in 1965-1970. Rural depopulation was acute in remote, mountainous and heavy snowfall areas, especially in the regions peripheral to the Tokyo-Nagoya-Osaka megalopolis, i. e. Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, Chugoku, and Tohoku (Map 1).

The rural depopulation process that occurred before the oil crisis of 1973 went through three stages, roughly from 1955-1960, 1960-1970, and 1970-1975 (Figure 1). Before 1960, drastic population deceases were limited to the most isolated mountainous villages. At first, mass media attention to this problem was scarce, and the general populace was unaware of the situation. At that time, many economists and forestry researchers interpreted this migration phenomenon as a rational labour force shift from a marginally depressed

Source : White Paper of Kaso (1972).
Note : The black areas indicate Kaso area.

Map 1　Distribution of Kaso Area in Japan



Source : Yearbook of Japan Statistics.

Figure 1　Depopulation and Gross National Product : 1955-1975

zone to a more viable one. Little attention was paid to the social consequences of rural out-migration.

Continued economic expansion during the 1960s accelerated rural-urban migration throughout Japan. Most of the municipalities located in mountainous areas suffered from serious problems associated with depopulation. A number of scholars, journalists and the government began investigating demographic, economic, social and fiscal changes and proposed some regional policy and community management programmes to solve them (Imai, 1968 ; Yoneyama, 1969 ; Masuda, 1978). The following problems were indicated as being the most serious : neglect of desirable and needed afforestation and reforestation efforts ; difficulty in maintaining the basic agricultural infrastructure ; the deteriorating quality of the labour force ; the increasing fiscal difficulties of local governments ; and the disorganization of community decision-making structures.

As a rule, most of the attention at this time was focused on economic activities and community infrastructure, while much less concern was paid to the deterioration of the social structure in these communities even though the fate of the latter greatly affected the former. In 1966, the Government of Japan referred, for the first time, to the above situation as the "Kaso" problem. Since that time, policies designed to tackle the Kaso problem have been initiated at all government levels.

In 1970, the Japanese Diet passed the Kaso Act, in which Kaso areas were legally defined as

municipalities where the population decrease was more than 10 percent during the five-year period between 1960 and 1965 and where the "Fiscal Capability Index" was less than 0.4 on the average from 1966 to 1968. Consequently, 23.7 percent of all municipalities (776 out of 3,280) were classified as Kaso areas in 1970 (Map 1).

The government established the following four goals to cope with the Kaso problem: a) consolidation of public transportation, b) raising the social welfare level, c) promoting the development of industries, and d) reorganizing village communities. In order to achieve these goals, the government invested more than 7,902 billion yen ($32 billion) in Kaso areas during the decade of the 1970s (Japan, National Land Agency, 1982).

Since the passage of this Act, the rate of rural depopulation has declined considerably. The 1975 Census reveals that only 13.6 percent of all municipalities (443 out of 3,257) showed a decrease of more than 10 percent during 1970-1975. It is quite probable that this decline has been mostly due to the slowdown of the Japanese economy after the oil crisis of 1973.

After the oil crises of 1973 and 1979, incentives for rural people to leave their villages decreased as Japan's economic growth began to slow. Some peripheral communities were successful in decreasing or even stopping out-migration and a number of smaller municipalities began a trend of population increase. For example, 15.9 percent of Kaso areas (178 out of 1,119 Kaso municipalities) grew in population between 1975 and 1980. This growth reflects a combination of one or more of the following five factors: a) geographical expansion of neighbouring cities, b) development of bedroom communities, c) arrival of new industries, d) creation of new local economic initiatives, and e) an increase in exploitation of energy resource development, e. g. dam construction. Accompanying this rural growth was the movement of the people, especially youngsters and retired persons, from large cities to the countryside in search of a new lifestyle.

Ⅲ. FACTORS AFFECTNG DEPOPULATION IN MOUNTAIN AREA

This section will discuss the theoretical model of the depopulation process and identify the factors that significantly affected depopulation in mountain areas.

Push-Pull Factors of Depopulation

The inducements to move away from mountain areas can be divided into external factors (pull factors) and internal factors (push factors), as is shown in Figure 2 (Mitsuda, 1976). The major pull factors are the drastic change in the nationwide labour force structure during the

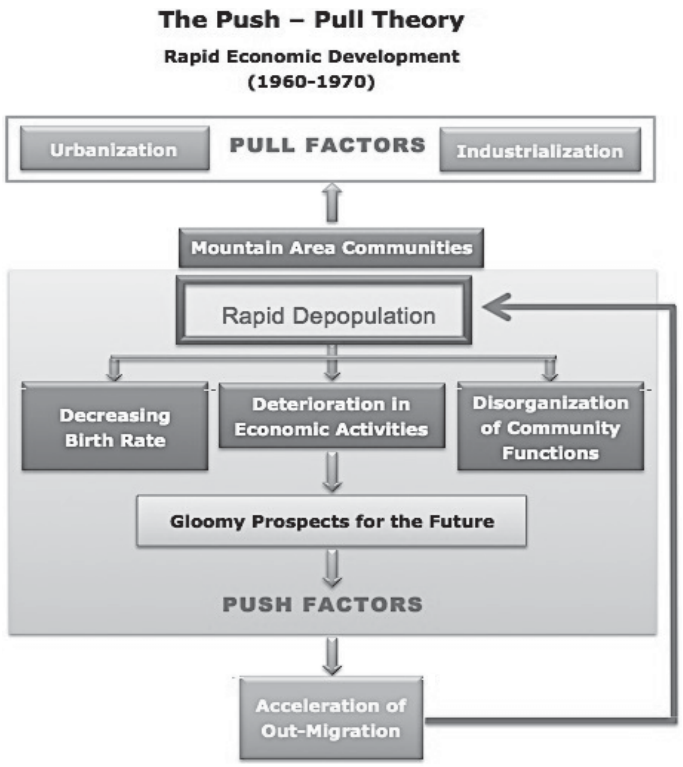


Figure 2　The Process of Depopulation in Mountain Area Communities

period of rapid economic development and the urban-rural differences in availability of employment, income, and standard of living and welfare levels. These pull factors have been strengthened by the expansion of urbanization and industrialization during the 1960-1970 period.

The push factors may be divided into economic, social, fiscal, psychological and demographic factors. Major economic push factors are the depressed position of forestry mainly due to the fuel revolution, the impact of increased imports of timber, the low productivity of agriculture and the relatively poor agricultural infrastructure in mountain areas.

Before 1960, charcoal making and firewood cutting had provided moderate incomes for many mountain villages. However, after the fuel revolution, production of charcoal decreased rapidly due to the shift away from charcoal use by Japanese households. In 1960, 1.5 million tons of charcoal were produced in Japan. Production declined to 0.6 million tons in 1965 ; 180,000 tons in 1970 ; 70,000 tons in 1975, and 35,000 in 1980. In other words, charcoal production in 1980 was less than 3 percent of what it was in 1960. The same phenomenon took place in firewood production which had declined in 1975 to 5 percent of the 1955 production figure. This drastic

change resulted in the loss of many job opportunities in forest communities. These developments hit small landowners harder especially because they received a large proportion of their incomes from charcoal and firewood production.

Starting in the 1960s, government policy de-emphasized the importance of domestic timber production and this led to rise in the amount of timber imported into Japan. In 1970, the amount was 6.6 times what it was in 1960. The rapidly increasing supply of imported timber has caused severe damage to domestic forestry. Having less than 5 ha, ninety-one percent of forest landowners gave up working their forest land because they could not afford to extend their businesses. Thus, the numbers of forest workers decreased from approximate 67,000 to 37,000 in 1970.

Farms in mountain area were usually very small. For example, in 1970 each farm household in mountain areas had an average of only 0.8 ha, mostly in terraced fields. The national average was 1.07 ha. In addition, the agricultural infrastructure was so poor that the net farm income in the mountain area in 1970 was 66.8 percent of the national average. In order to supplement their incomes, 86 percent of farm households engaged in part-time employment. But the remote locations from urban areas have limited the opportunities from off-farm urban employment for the villagers. Most of them had to work as temporary workers, often for low wages.

The social push factors include the lack of social or welfare facilities – roads, drinking water and sewer systems, school, and hospitals – and the difficulty of maintaining these community functions. Differences in the availability of social and welfare facilities were extreme between Kaso areas and non-Kaso areas in 1975 (Japan, Ministry of Home affairs, 1975). For example, only 11 percent of roads in Kaso areas were paved compared to 24 percent in non-Kaso areas. The rate of extension of the water system in Kaso areas was 67 percent while that of non-Kaso area was 90 percent. The number of hospital beds per 1,000 population was 87.1 in Kaso areas compared to 129.3 in non-Kaso areas. Since local governments located in Kaso areas were malfunctioning, they were unable to provide the residents with the (needed) desired public services.

It is obvious that the residents, especially youngsters, felt that future prospects in their own communities were dim, and thus they preferred to leave for the cities. This may be called the psychological push factor. The demographic factor is the decrease in birth rate due to the increase in the proportion of the aged population structure and the population itself. The process of depopulation can be theoretically described as circular and cumulative causation. Push-pull factors operate as a downward spiral to continue and strengthen the process of

depopulation.

To sum up, the external influences, i. e. urbanization and industrialization, have drastically changed the community structure in mountain communities. These structural changes resulted in the loss of economic vitality (community cohesion and control over making decisions) and weakening of community pride and identity.

Finally, people lost the community ideology on which they could base development or reorganization. The result is a community that exists physically, but does not sociologically.

Ⅳ. IMPACTS OF OUT-MIGRATION ON COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

The following two case studies provide some insight into the impact of depopulation on community social structure and what some communities have done with depopulation.

i) Deterioration of a Traditional Community Structure : The case of Haiya village

The village of Haiya was initially established around the sixteen century as a forest village to provide charcoal and timber for the city of Kyoto, especially the Imperial Palace of the pre-Tokugawa era. Haiya was built along the banks of small stream and is surrounded be steep mountains. Forest lands have always dominated the village while farm with hilly fields have traditionally been few and small size. The standard of living has generally been extremely poor and, because of its geographical isolation, Haiya village has economically and socially self-sufficient.

The deterioration of the traditional social structure of Haiya began with the fall of a prominent pioneer family - the Wada - around 1920. During the Meiji and Taisho eras (1868-1924), the family owned over half of the forest lands and farmlands in the village. They were also the core family of the large extended family system and therefore exercised influence over the extended families. The Wada family had near absolute power in economic, social and administrative activities during the Meiji and Taisho eras.

At this time, the community structure of the village was based on traditional communal ties, i. e. the landowner and tenant relationship, or "Honke and Bunke" relationship (the relationship between main stem family and side stem family). In the early Showa era around 1930, the former head of the Wada died and left behind huge debts after mismanaging all of the family properties. The position of the Wada family deteriorated rapidly.

In the following years, substantial numbers of local landowners sold their forest property to outside businesses or landowners and left Haiya for the cities. This depopulation deprived

Haiya of many potential leaders who could have organized community development. No other family took over the role of community leader.

Out-Migration from Haiya continued after the war, primarily because of the fuel revolution. Forty-four percent of the total population in 1960 left for cities during the decade of 1960-1970. The deterioration of charcoal production deprived the village of their major source of income, and forest landowners were confronted with the task of transforming their community economy from charcoal production to timber production. However, local people had difficulties in making this change because of the pattern of small-scale land ownership in that area (the average landowner had less than 10 ha).

It should be noted that in the Haiya case the larger forest landowners were the first to leave because they were pessimistic about the future of the forestry industry. Then forest workers, because of the low wages and large number of accidents associated with their profession, looked for opportunities to work in nearby towns or migrated to large cities.

After migration of landowners, most of the forest lands in the village were purchased by outside businesses and speculators who hired temporary workers. The migrant temporary workers began to flow into village sites and developed into a rootless labour force. Although they established links with local labour force in production activities, in social life they were alienated and segregated as outsiders. Outside control became stronger and old-timers lost their autonomy over decision-making and developing the natural resources near Haiya.

To summarize the case study of Haiya, the traditional community structure deteriorated because of heavy out-migration of community leaders, inability to develop the local economy by means of a new forest management industry, and inflow of outside temporary workers. The loss of community decision-making ability to cope with the out-migration problems weakened the sense of solidarity among the villagers, and most members eventually gave up trying to push for local community development. Consequently, out-migration accelerated. Today, about 40 percent of the remaining household heads are old and are out of work with gloomy prospects for the future (Figure 3).

ii) Revitalization of Community : The case of Ashu village

Ashu has one of the largest old-growth forests in Japan. After Kyoto University bought 4,162 ha of this forest for research purpose in 1923, Ashu had been a major producer of charcoal. Most families in Ashu either produced charcoal as a family operation or were employed by the University. However, after the fuel revolution resulted in the deterioration of charcoal

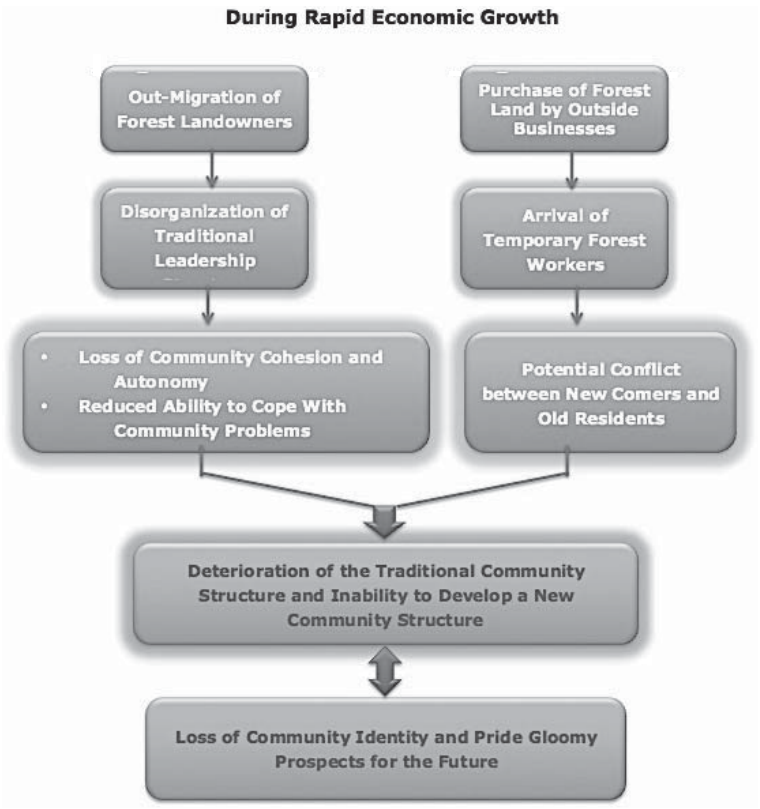


Figure 3　Depopulation and Deterioration of Mountain Villages during Rapid Economic Growth : Haiya village

production, the occupational structure of the village changed from a uniform structure (i. e. charcoal making) to a threefold structure (i. e. employees at the research grounds of Kyoto University, forest workers who were employed in the forest work union, and employees of the "mountain vegetable" processing industry).

The families employed by Kyoto University research were guaranteed their status and income as civil servants and were not influenced by the fuel revolution. Because of their stable income and status, these families ranked high on the socioeconomic scale of the community.

On the other hand, the families that were not involved with the University have suffered severe damage during the fuel revolution. Since they lacked measures to reforest their lands after heavy use of lumber in the years following the war, most of the forest land became bare with no economic value. There were no possibilities for transforming forest industry into a forest management programme.

Meanwhile, Kyoto University introduced a new employment policy that restricted

employment opportunities in the research field. Consequently, most forest workers were forced to seek employment as low wage labourers. Most of them became migrant workers, as they were unable to sustain themselves on other kinds of employment.

After the 1960s, many villagers emigrated from the community, usually as entire families. Consequently, between 1960 and 1970 the population of Ashu declined from 130 to 98 people, and the number of households in the village decreased from 45 to 33.

Members of the Ashu community seriously discussed methods of stopping out-migration. Development of the production of so-called "mountain vegetables" (Sansai) and the corresponding processing industry was attempted by the community and a local production cooperative was founded.

In the beginning, because production was not stable, the industry operated in the red, and many members dropped out. However, over a period of ten years, three leaders who were cousins continued to improve production methods and management. During Japan's period of rapid economic growth, urbanites began to prefer these "natural" foods. By 1978 the Sansai industry had stabilized with sales of approximately 80 million yen (approximate $320,000). Youth returned from urban areas and other community members joined the group.

During the process of promoting the Sansai industry, members of Ashu village learned the importance of community solidarity and consensus among members and the permeation of progressive ideas of community leaders. As a result, the Sansai cooperative began to take the lead in decision-making for many community problems. As the Sansai industry achieved sales of 100 million yen per year (approximate $400,000) in 1980, the leaders of the Sansai cooperative began to gain the community's respect for their abilities and accomplishments.

The case of Ashu village presents an example of successful community development by a) promoting substitute industry suited to the natural environmental setting of that area while primarily involving community participation and b) establishing the principle of "cooperation and equality" under the leadership of those who had excellent abilities and respect from community members (Figure 4).

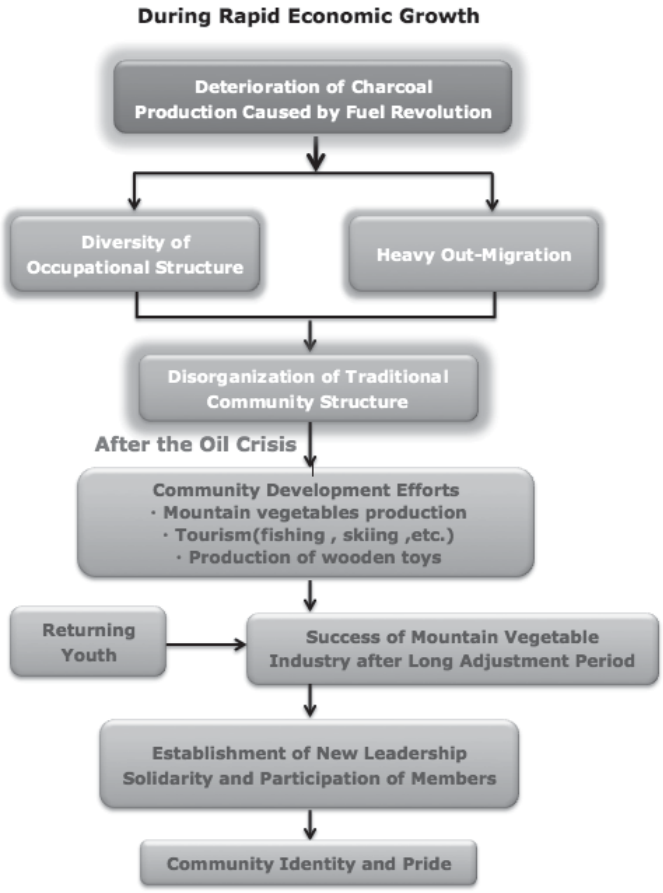


Figure 4　Creation of New Industry and Community Reorganization : Ashu village

V. CONCLISIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, the findings of this study (Kaso problem) lead us to the following conclusions :

1) The "pull factors" of Japan's economic growth and fuel revolution in the 1960s rapidly accelerated the migration of the rural population, especially from remote and mountainous areas into urban areas.

2) The "push factors" which significantly affected out-migration were : low production density, high percentage of unproductive lands (forest and fields) and a high percentage of household income in primary industry sectors.

3) The process of depopulation can be described as a downward spiral of circular and cumulative causation of push-pull factors including economic, social, fiscal and psychological ones.

4）It seems unavoidable that communities experiencing rapid out-migration would lose their community solidarity and autonomy.

5）The serious obstacles for community development effort are a）the deterioration of the traditional social structure that often caused disorganization in community decision-making abilities b）the reduced ability to institute new forms of community organization and decision-making.

The following policy recommendations for community development of depopulated areas could be considered from these conclusions :

1）The creation of new industries that make best use of the geographic setting of the region, e. g. tourism, mountain vegetable industry, wood toy factory, educational centres, etc.

2）The development of human capital and community organizations through the participation and consensus of all community members.

3）Concerted efforts to cope with depopulation problems and to help local people and community institutions improve the quality of life through development of local plans.

Additional research will be required to clarify and solve depopulation problems in mountain areas. Among other things, research is needed :

1）To identify depopulation problems left unresolved ;

2）To examine what kinds of community development efforts have succeeded in coping with the impacts of heavy out-migration ; and

3）To study ways to establish and reform new community structures in mountain villages, especially decision-making structures.

Finally, there is a need to study the relationship between rural development and globalization that will affect the agenda for the new agriculture and rural development policy in Vietnam :

1）Increasing globalization of the world economy has a crucial impact on the process of industrialization and urbanization in Vietnam that is different to the Japanese experiences.

2）The experience of global culture triggered by an expansion of social media and social network services, such as Facebook and Twitter, can make influential changes to traditional lifestyles and social network in Vietnam. In particular, youngsters can have their eyes opened to “global consumer space.” It will be an unprecedented factor in growing urbanization and rural social development.

3）The work of international aid donors such as the World Bank and the United Nations Organizations（FAO, UNESCO, ILO, etc.）can influence institutional and social structure. This may be crucial for rural development policy in Vietnam.

4）Mitigation of climate change and the need for a low-carbon society beyond rapid growth

are key issues for the new rural development agenda in Vietnam.

Rural problems are recognized as unavoidable social phenomena in the process of modernization, urbanization and industrialization in both developed and developing countries. However, there are ways of avoiding the problems of rural population loss with appropriate study and planning. Coping with rural problems in a globalizing world is an emerging agenda for rural policy in Vietnam as well as a global challenge for the world.

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NOTES

(1) Kaso : newly coined word in the 1970s in Japan. It comes from 'ka'＝excessive and 'so'＝remote, with a negative connotation. For example, if one says, "my home town became 'ka-so' (although one moved to the city and thus making a living)" it is almost equivalent of saying "my village became a ghost town".

(2) Kamitsu : 'kamitsu' which means excessive congestion, which was also happening is some of the urban areas and industrial zones at the same time.

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〔付記〕

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「ベトナム農業農村開発に関する国際フォーラム」
（Cao Duc Phat 農業大臣の基調講演）

「ベトナム農業農村開発に関する国際フォーラム」
（筆者のスピーチ）

（みつだ　ひさよし　公共政策学科）

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